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ABSTRACT

This document contains three papers from a symposium on international perspectives on human resource development (HRD). The first paper, "Human Resource Development Practices in American and Chinese High-technology Companies in Taiwan" (Hsin-yi Chen), uses quantitative and qualitative data on HRD practices in high-technology companies in the United States and Taiwan to identify the differences between HRD practices in the two countries. The findings from a study of the HRD expectations and requirements of local nationals in the Ivory Coast, a West African nation undergoing large-scale economic change, are reported in "Changing Work Cultures: Assessing HRD Needs in Francophone West Africa" (Carol D. Harsen, Janet Headley). "Human Resource Development in the People's Republic of China" (Bohua Yan, Gary N. McLean) describes the history and present state of HRD in the People's Republic of China, paying special attention to the following strategies that have been used to improve HRD in the country: reform higher education; strengthen vocational education, encourage young people to study abroad and professionals to work abroad and then return to China; and implement preferential policies to encourage Chinese people who have studied abroad to return to China to work. (MN)

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Changing Work Cultures: Assessing HRD Needs in Francophone West Africa

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Human Resource Development Practices in American and Chinese High-technology Companies in Taiwan

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Human resource development is now highly valued in Taiwan. The HRD practices in American and Chinese companies in Taiwan are quite different. Both quantitative and qualitative data concerning HRD practices in the two type of companies were collected for the study. The data showed that evaluation is the weakest part of the HRD practice in both categories of companies. American companies have stronger future perspective, participant commitment and professional leadership than the Chinese companies in Taiwan.

The purpose of this study is to examine the differences in human resource development (HRD) practices between American and Chinese corporations in high-technology companies in Taiwan. HRD is a relatively new field in Taiwan. Although the companies realize that the HRD should be highly valued, how to make HRD fully effective is still an unsolved issue.

It is believed that the process of localizing HRD is important in multinational enterprises (MNE) (Torrington 1994). The foreign companies in Taiwan made their contributions not only in the growth of economy, but also in the transition of the management system. Because of support in the form of documentation and HRD system from the parent country, it is believed that the HRD practices in American companies are better than those in Chinese companies (Chen 1995). Discovering the differences between the American subsidiaries in Taiwan and the Chinese companies in HRD might give us some insight into the trend of localization and/or the path to improvement.

This paper reports the results of a survey on HRD practices and the findings from in-depth interviews with the HR managers of companies in high technology industry in Taiwan. A discussion of implications of these results for HRD practices concludes the paper.

Theoretical framework

HRD Effectiveness. The issue of HRD effectiveness has been raised ever since HRD moved from back to center stage and began to gain a much more important role in the organization than before (Kanter 1983; Chalofsky & Reinhart 1988; Carnevale, Gainer, & Villet 1990). Effective HRD functions not only improve employees' competencies but also help organizations reach their goals. To maximize the effectiveness of HRD, researchers have made the effort to define what effective HRD is. Several researchers have provided the ideas for measurement of HRD effectiveness (Shoemaker 1987, Lippitt 1982, Zenger & Blitzer 1981, Alden 1982, Bell 1984, Chalofsky & Reinhart 1988).

Human Resource Development Assessment Inventory. This study is based on Lippitt's (1976) Human Resource Development Assessment Inventory (HRDAI) for examination of the HRD effectiveness. Lippitt (1976) developed a set of criteria as guidelines for effective development processes. These include: relevant needs, clear objectives, accomplishment, uniqueness, flexibility, skill orientation, professional leadership, future perspective, value system, evaluation, information system, organizational support and participant commitment.

Relevant Needs. The first criterion in Lippitt's model is relevant needs. To examine whether the organization fulfills this criterion, a question must be raised: Does projected HRD take into account the present state of needs and disequilitrium?

Clear Objectives. The "clear" means that the objectives are clear to meet all concerns and measurable. Although not all objectives can be exactly measured, at least they should be stated in measurable terms.

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Accomplishment. Achievement-based behavior is expected and rewarded in the organizations. HRD should be guided by these measures of accomplishment.

Uniqueness. Standard methods and predesigned programs may be used, but certain changes must be made to adapt these to different situations.

Flexibility. Organizations are open and changing from time to time. HRD should be flexible enough to meet the ongoing and changing needs of the human system and the organization.

Skill Orientation. The ability to actually practice what one has learned is the essence of effective growth. Thus, examination of whether the projected HRD stresses skill development for competence in behavior is another important criterion of effective HRD.

Professional leadership. The projected HRD should be led by a professional helper, trainer, or consultant.

Future Perspectives. Lippitt suggests that the organizations should have five-year goals for the future. The plans and goals for the future should be practical.

Value System. People from different backgrounds will have different value systems. An effective HRD administrator should ask if the projected HRD program is founded on an articulated value system whose purposes are clear and philosophically consistent with norms, values, expectations, and goals held by that particular human system or not.

Evaluation. A "whole" evaluation package is needed in the projected HRD. The package includes the technology, concepts and methods of evaluation.

Information System. People involved in HRD should know that analysis, diagnosis and prognosis are taking place in a systematic and informative manner. The organization should have a valuable human resource inventory that provides valid, up-to-date information about the competence of people in the system.

Organizational Support. The projected HRD should have the policies, personnel and budget support, and leaders' involvement. That will make the projected HRD more effective.

Participant Commitment. Effective HRD needs participant commitment. The projected HRD should strengthen the participants' desire to cope, solve problems, and mature.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The two major research questions in this study were: (1) Are there any significant differences between the HRD practices of American and Chinese firms in Taiwan? (2) How are HRD practices (based on HRDAI) being carried out within the high-tech industry in Taiwan?

The HRD practices questionnaire was used to answer the first research question. The null hypothesis of the question is: there is no significant difference in the human resource development practice of American and Chinese high-technology companies in Taiwan. The qualitative data of the study provided the information and answer for the second research question.

Methodology

Both of the quantitative and the qualitative research methods were used in the study. The quantitative method was used to examine the differences in HRD practices between the American and Chinese companies, while the in-depth interview was used to find out how the HRD practices were being carried out within the high-technology industry in Taiwan.

Subjects. A major weakness that has been criticized in many cross-cultural studies is the failure to control for organizational size, technology and type of industry (Hegandhi, 1975; Adler, 1983). A high percentage of the American companies in Taiwan are in the electronics industry. Therefore, to avoid the above mentioned weakness in this study, the sample will concentrate on American and Chinese in high-technology firms.

For purposes of comparison between the two types of firms, the following criteria are employed to select target firms for this study.

1. The total population includes any firm that employed more than 400 people in 1995.

2. The American target firms were selected from the American Firms in Taiwan. Similarity sized Chinese firms in high technology industry were selected from the list of the Top 500 Corporations and Top 100 Corporations in the Service Industry published by Taiwan's "Common Wealth" magazine in June 1995.
3. A total of 16 companies, 10 Chinese and 6 American high-technology companies in Taiwan, were finally selected.

Instrument. The HRD practices questionnaire was used in this study. The scale of the questionnaire was based on Lippitt's Human Resource Development Assessment Inventory. The questionnaire was responded to by the HR manager or HR staff in the organization.

Twelve criteria, including relevant needs, clear objectives, accomplishment, uniqueness, flexibility, skill oriented, professional leadership, future perspective, evaluation, information system, organizational support, and participant commitment, are reviewed by asking relevant questions. The Answer 5 means the criterion has been considered all the time, and answer 1 means the criterion has not been considered at all. The scale of the questionnaire was shown as follows:

1	2	3	4	5
Not at All	Few Times	Some Times	Most Times	All the Time

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected.

Results

Sixteen structured interviews were conducted to obtain information on HRD practices in the participating companies. The interview questions were based on Lippitt's Human Resource Development Assessment Inventory (HRDAI). Interviewees were asked to assign a score to each question, to explain why they assigned the respective scores, and to discuss how their companies dealt with the various issues being scored.

Quantitative data. The first research question is : Are there any significant differences between the HRD practices of American and Chinese firms in Taiwan? In order to examine this question, the ANOVA test was applied to the twelve HRD criteria to test the hypotheses.

The comparison of HRD scores of American and Chinese companies is presented in Table 1. Results showed the descending mean of the criteria were: skill based, relevant needs, criteria based, flexibility, participant commitment, organizational support, uniqueness, professional leadership, clear objectives, information system, future perspective, evaluation. From the results, we found that the evaluation is the weakest part of the training process among the selected companies. That means the companies need technology, concepts and methods to produce meaningful evaluation. The skill-oriented is the strongest part of the training process. That means the projected HRD did stress skill development for actual behavioral or performance competency.

The descending mean of the American companies were: skill-based, accomplishment, participant commitment, organizational support, professional leadership(all of the above were 5.00), relevant needs, future perspective, flexibility (all of the above were 4.83), uniqueness, information system (both of above were 4.67), clear objectives, and evaluation. Five of the twelve criteria got the highest score. Results showed the American companies had support from the organization, employees and also from the HR department. Again, the evaluation part and the criterion related to evaluation - clear objective - were the weakest part of their HRD practices.

The descending mean of the Chinese companies were: skill based, relevant needs, criteria based, flexibility, uniqueness, participant commitment, organizational support, clear objectives, professional leadership, information system, future perspective, evaluation. Compared with the results of the American companies, the Chinese companies did not get much support from either organization or employees. Evaluation is the weakest part of the HRD practices in Chinese companies.

Table 1. The Comparison of HRD Criterion of Chinese and American Firms

Criterion	Means	Chinese Firms	American Firm	P value
Skill Based	4.88	4.80	5.00	0.271
Relevant Needs	4.75	4.70	4.83	0.581
Accomplishment	4.75	4.60	5.00	0.082 *
Flexibility	4.56	4.40	4.83	0.191
Participant Commitment	4.38	4.00	5.00	0.003 **
Organizational Support	4.38	4.00	5.00	0.055 *
Uniqueness	4.38	4.20	4.67	0.267
Professional Leadership	4.31	3.90	5.00	0.043 **
Clear Objectives	4.19	4.00	4.50	0.340
Information System	4.13	3.80	4.67	0.229
Future Perspective	4.06	3.60	4.83	0.005 **
Evaluation	3.44	3.10	4.00	0.175

*significant at.10; **significant at .05.

Results also showed significant differences between company type and future perspective, professional leadership, and participant commitment at .05 level; accomplishment and organizational support at .10 level.

Therefore, we can say that the future perspective, professional leadership, participant commitment, accomplishment, and organizational support were better carried out in American companies rather than in Chinese companies. The qualitative data might give us more information and implications of the issues.

Qualitative data. The second research question - How are HRD practices (based on HRDAI) being carried out within the high-tech industry in Taiwan? - was answered by the in-depth interview with the HR managers or HR staff in the companies.

Qualitative data issues most often mentioned by the interviewees included future perspectives, evaluations, professional leadership, and organizational support.

Future Perspective. Most companies only have a one-year training plan. Only four companies have three-to-five year training plans. Not surprisingly, American firms in Taiwan, as subsidiaries of their parent companies in the United States, tend to have more clearly structured HRD programs. Their future plans are built on the existing frameworks in their headquarters. Chinese firms, on the other hand, have to design their own HRD systems from zero. An interviewee from a Chinese high-technology firm said that it is often difficult enough to keep up with scheduled HRD activities let alone foresee future ones. She said, "In this company, the president strongly supports the HRD department. But he tends to believe in imitating others where they have been successful. For example, last month he saw that another company used a video recording to both introduce the company to, and train, new employees. He asked us to prepare a similar video recording, to be completed in one month. We had to postpone many of our regular activities in order to execute this order, as there are only three of us in this department. Things like this often happen, and it is difficult to say what our future perspectives are. Perhaps the blueprint for this is known only to the president. None of us can foresee the situation in the next few years. We are limited to short-term plans at present." Most of the Chinese high-technology firms in this study are in similar situations.

Training systems were begun in the mid-1980s by some of the American companies in Taiwan. Most of the others set up their systems around the beginning of the 1990s. Thus, most companies are still laying the groundwork in their HR departments. As one HR manager explained, "What we can do now is to focus on the present system. Future perspectives for our department are goals and not practical possibilities at this time."

Evaluation and professional leadership. All the interviewees agree on the importance of evaluations in HRD practices. But data from the interviews also revealed this to be the greatest weakness of HRD in Taiwan. A few American companies escape this, as they have guidelines on this from their headquarters in the United States. Almost all the Chinese companies are still

struggling with the basics of evaluation.

Based on the interviewees' comments, at least two areas need special attention. First, there is a lack of both HRD personnel and relevant knowledge. An interviewee complained, there are only two people handling HRD here; actually, only one-and-a-half people are involved in the training process. It is very easy to pass out evaluation forms, but we are short of staff when it comes to analyzing the feedback. We end up doing the bare minimum: seeing whether the instructors were satisfied with the trainees or not." Another interviewee said, "We have all the evaluation records, but we don't know how to interpret the results. To tell you the truth, we have neither the knowledge nor the methodology to handle this. Nobody has taught us how to use the data to improve our HRD practices." Another problem comes from the cooperation between of the trainees and their supervisors. Even the HR staff can resolve the above problem. It's also hard to know whether the trainees' behavior changed after the training, especially at the management level. An HR manager complained, "It's hard to conduct the follow-up evaluation after the trainees go back to their departments. We need the cooperation from the trainees' supervisors or the supervisors themselves. But most of time, it's difficult to get the managers' feedback. They always complain that they are too busy to fill out the evaluation form or give the reports back."

Second, there is often a lack of cooperation from the trainees and the supervisors. It is difficult to keep track of the employees' development after the initial training, especially at the management level. An HR manager complained, "It is difficult to conduct follow-up evaluations after the employees return to their respective departments. We need cooperation from both employees and their supervisors. But they complain that they are too busy ... to fill out the forms, to return forms, etc."

Combined with the questionnaire results, the above information pinpoints evaluation as one of the weakest aspects of HRD in Taiwan. Less than 20% of the companies think that their evaluation process is adequate. Clearly, improvement in this area is sorely needed.

Organizational Support. Basically, all the interviewees agree that they have strong support from the top management levels. For Chinese companies, their problems with support generally come from the mid-level management. One of the interviewees said, "The president strongly supports my department. The most difficult thing is to make mid-level managers believe that the activities we arrange are good for them and for their future." Another said, "You don't need for all the managers to doubt the results of the training and to argue with you. All it takes is three or four of them, and you begin to doubt the amount of general support you're getting from your company." This appeared to be a common situation for the interviewees.

American employees, however, seem to have accepted their HRD systems more. An HR manager in an American firm claimed, "Everyone in my company knows when, and what, he(she) needs in terms of training. I think that such training has become part of our lives. You could say that this attitude is company culture."

After analyzing the data, it is found that although most of the top management levels are supportive of HRD activities in an organization (regardless of company nationality), there are still significant differences between American and Chinese companies. American CEOs tend to communicate their views on HRD directly to all levels of employees, thus enhancing the status of HRD in general among the staff. Chinese CEOs communicate their interest only to their companies' HR staffs; this seems to foster a lack of interest in HRD among employees, and consequently hurts the standing of HRD within their companies.

Implications and Conclusions

One of the advantages in HRD of MNEs is that they have support from their parent companies. In this study, the frameworks for HRD practices in American companies are transplanted from their parent companies, with some modifications to suit the culture of the host country. Most of the Chinese companies are still struggling with basic frameworks for HRD practices. Therefore, if the experiences of localization and the frameworks for HRD practice in American companies can be transplanted to the Chinese companies, it will be a great opportunity

to improve the HRD practices of the local companies.

Although evaluation is the weakest part of HRD practices in high-technology firms, some companies in the survey did not think evaluation is a big problem for HRD activities. Sharing of successful evaluation experiences and evaluation system with other companies might improve the quality of evaluation in companies that are recipients of this sharing.

The organizational commitment to HRD is relatively low in Chinese companies. As the interviewees mentioned, training is part of the corporate culture in American companies, while some of the employees in Chinese companies still think training has no bearing on their performance. To introduce the concept of life long learning is one of the policies of the government in Taiwan in these years. It may change the employees' attitudes about training and improve the organizational commitment in HRD practices.

As the economic power of Taiwan grew over the last decade. More Taiwanese enterprises made direct investments or set up subsidiaries in other countries. Under these circumstances, successful cases of how foreign companies adapt their HR systems to suit the local culture is a priceless lesson for these Taiwan enterprises. To develop their own management style in a way that includes adaptation to the local culture is increasingly a vital challenge for Chinese companies in Taiwan. The experiences of American companies in Taiwan are a good lesson for them.

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Changing Work Cultures: Assessing HRD Needs in Francophone West Africa

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This paper reports findings from a study of HRD expectations and requirements in the Cote d"Ivoire, a West African nation undergoing large scale economic change. The study's aim was to uncover the perspectives of local nationals who would model and lead reform efforts. Theoretically, the research was grounded in doctrines of cultural relativism and organizational change and designed to add cross-cultural knowledge of HRD models.

This decade's privatization movement has caused work cultures to change in much of the developing world (Traore, 1990; Woods, 1995). Creating the infrastructures and manpower needed to support new productivity models and fully integrate into global markets requires skills and knowledge not commonly found in state controlled work cultures.

Traditional thinking suggests that change must be stimulated from the outside, through a transfer of work and development models from "First World" countries. Thus, economic transformation often places Third World organizations in a confusing state of social transition as they attempt to reconcile cultural differences inherent in indigenous practices. Moreover, these issues challenge HRD practitioners who are most often charged with the training and nurturing of new skills and behaviors.

This paper will report findings from the Cote d'Ivoire, a developing nation in Francophone West Africa that is undergoing rapid large scale change. Government leaders in this country wish to support reform efforts by creating their own national center for the development of human resources. This assessment will thus frame the center's creation. The study was notably designed to explore change needs from the cultural perspective of local nationals. The following purposes framed the research:

1. To investigate the perceived need for change.
2. To identify perceived employee and organizational change requirements.
3. To explore perceived cultural roots and contexts that may influence change efforts.

The research was theoretically grounded in doctrines of cultural relativism and organizational change. The research first followed the premise that the transfer of foreign models often fails because it does not begin with an understanding of local culture (Dia, 1996; Jones, 1989). Prior study suggests that goals and strategies are subject to cross-cultural variation because they are, in part, shaped by nationally grounded differences about the nature of work and organizational life (Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, & Sanders, 1989; Laurent, 1986).

Second, aspects of change theory influenced the need to understand HRD needs through the eyes of local nationals. These postulates suggest that change interventions must be compatible with current value and belief systems (Rogers, 1973). Likewise, change occurs faster and the recipients are less resistant if the perceived gap between new and current expectations is small. Additionally, the recipients must believe that there is a need to transform current policies and practices and, in turn, perceive these new models as beneficial. Finally, the influence of organizational leadership, in the form of founding fathers and their recruits, on work cultures (Schein, 1985, 1991) influenced the decision to collect data from informants in senior and mid-level management who would most likely teach and model reform efforts.

Methodology

The theory-driven sample (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) consisted of 70 intensive ethnographic interviews (Spradely, 1979)conducted in French with informants in the private, para-public, and public sectors. Senior level managers were at the CEO or COO level whereas mid-level managers were drawn from 3 functional areas: human resources, marketing, and finance.

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Focus Questions

Constructs of productivity were linked to expectations for economic growth and evolution. This connection framed the desire to understand the informants' own concept of productivity and development through the following focus questions:

1. How do the informants define organizational and individual productivity?
2. What do the informants see as necessary organizational support and individual behaviors needed to reach their definitions of productivity?
3. How do informants define constraints to productive behavior?

It is important to note that these focus questions did not constitute testable hypotheses. Instead, they guided and helped focus this exploration of HRD needs and assumptions.

Procedurally, informants were asked to define their own concept of productivity by describing what they considered to be worthwhile goals for their nation's economy and for their own business since productivity is key to global competition and successful privatization. Likewise, informants were asked to identify perceived characteristics of a productive employee. Informants were then asked to describe both current and ideal management practices and employee development models. Finally, informants were asked to describe organizational constraints, individual behaviors, and societal values that could impede productive work behavior. Illustrations and examples were additionally captured by asking informants to tell one or more stories (Hansen & Kahnweiler, 1993) about a manager who must deal with a nonproductive employee or group of employees.

Data Analysis

All interview data were recorded, transcribed and coded (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Categorical development followed procedures for open and axial coding. Selective coding was then used to identify categorical links. These links led to data convergence in the form of emergent themes. Efforts to ensure internal validity involved the triangulation of data through multiple analysts (Tammivara & Enright, 1986). Findings and emergent themes were additionally confirmed local key informants.

Findings and Conclusions

Emerging Themes Productivity constructs were defined as challenges to current work practices and societal norms. The findings permitted the thematic development of five productivity challenges: (1) assuring types of quality, (2) ways of becoming competitive, (3) addressing kinds of infrastructure problems, (4) ways of changing management behaviors, and (5) addressing African values and attitudes towards work. Sackman's (1991) four-component framework of cultural knowledge provided a topology for interpreting the findings. Thematic data for "becoming competitive" will illustrate this approach:

Dictionary Knowledge: The "what is." This section contains definitions of challenges. Competitive challenges were described as really knowing the market, satisfying the customer, producing high quality products, improving management and reducing business expenses. Managerial challenges, for example, were broken down and further defined as working effectively in international settings, managing employees in an objective manner, and motivating employees to be responsible and creative.

Directionary Knowledge. The "how." These findings provide formal and unwritten rules for how roles and tasks are carried out. This section also includes current rules for relationships and processes associated with change and learning. In interpreting the data at this level, the question arises, for example, of how managers currently encourage responsibility among their employees? Informants offered, for the most part, negative examples and discussed what managers did to demotivate employees.

Informants indicated that managers, for example, did not typically share information and delegate authority, although employees feel empowered when information was shared within an organization. Job evaluation and compensation were not tied to performance. Credentials in the form of degrees, associated with high profile projects, and family and ethnic ties often determined pay scales and promotional opportunities. Furthermore, it was suggested that change was hard to implement and often yielded

confusing results.

Recipe Knowledge: The "should." Recipe knowledge consists of remedies for improving ways to carry out roles and tasks. Informants indicated that managers should practice an open, participative style of management. Employees should be better informed about the relationship of their work and business goals. Managers must be willing to take risks with their employees and permit them more independence. Likewise, employees must be able to reach decisions quickly and be directly responsible for the consequences of their actions which includes both the good and the bad.

In turn, promotions should be based on performance and not credentials or nepotism. Moreover, managers must be able to clearly communicate work criteria and purposes.

Axiomatic Knowledge. The "why." This section often yields the richest data as it attempts to offer explanations that underlie the first three knowledge levels. In this case, informants concluded that a lack of clear communication and information sharing was rampant in most organizations. Moreover, many managers did not explain the relationship between a given job and the companies business objectives because companies did not practice strategic planning. Informants linked their ineptitude in planning and forecasting to the lack of problem-solving taught in school and university. They explained that they learned theory without application. Informants also linked planning constraints to the uncertainty and interference of one's personal life. Family and community obligations, such as funerals or the needs a village member in distress, were not taken lightly and typically came before one's job and business. Thus one's personal obligations could unexpectedly cause one's work to be halted for an indefinite period of time.

While such fealties nurtured community bonds and solidarity, they also fostered distrust and divisiveness between different ethnic groups in all organizations. Moreover, objective decision-making, information sharing, teamwork, and participative management were often impeded by tribal loyalties. Finally, passive employee behavior and paternalistic management styles reflected a respect for authority that one is expected to show for one's elders. The term "firm father" was used to describe the ideal manager. Moreover, the term "little or big brother" was used a great deal to describe family or tribal relationships among individuals working even in the same company. Relations based on seniority complicated work relations especially between young managers and older subordinates.

Informants also explained that Africans disliked the open acknowledgment of conflict. It was often hard to address the strife that often accompanies the identification of change needs and the implementation of new strategies. Another complicated task for managers was the sanctioning of inappropriate behavior.

Implications The informants clearly saw the need to transform their present work cultures. Moreover, the data emphasized the human side of this transformation. That is, the informants believed that productivity would be mostly enhanced through a change in their own work behaviors rather than though massive capital or financial acquisitions. It is notable that this finding was consistent in the private as well as the public and parapublic sectors. The sector that expressed the greatest need for change was the parapublic sector whose organizations were expected to become profitable and self-sustainable in five years or less.

Training development for managers, for example, is needed is areas such as strategic planning, organizational communication, team building, and managerial delegation. Career development is needed is the areas of employee counseling, employee motivation, and performance evaluation. Finally, organizational systems must be changed to delayer management, enhance information sharing, and ensure objective measures of hiring and promotion. While the informants indicated that they had been exposed to many of these theories, there appears to be a lack of application.

The desire to privatize, westernize and capitalize is very strong. However, this country is not likely to change its cultural core values and its basic class structure nor diminish its community and tribal loyalties. Informant data strongly suggested that these cultural frames will interfere with the transfer and application of new HRD theories from afar. Many of the findings reported in this study clash with the values of spirit of profit motive, material security, and self-reliance and self-interest that typically drive Western models of entrepreneurship (Dia, 1996). These differences are also supported by Binet (1970) and Hofstede (1984) who found Africans to be far more collective, nurturing, hierarchial and fatalistic than, for example, their European or American counterparts. Some theorists characterize this economic

and societal emphasis on tribalism and ethnicity as the "economy of affection" (Hayden 1983; Hayden & Peters, 1991). They suggest that these ties play a significant force in framing work cultures that can not be denied.

Human behavior is greatly shaped by one's cultural beliefs. Cultural beliefs are not necessarily rational. They are grounded in values that were learned and developed as early as one's childhood. In this country, these beliefs are additionally reinforced by the constant sense of community obligation that shape employees' personal and professional lives.

New Knowledge in HRD

African management research conducted by The World Bank (Dia, 1996) suggests that organizations who have successfully introduced foreign models into existing systems are those who have build upon existing cultural frames. It thus follows that a change in work practices and HRD models can be supported or hindered by the perceived similarity between current and new cultural expectations (Hansen & Brooks, 1994).

A leading utility and hotel chain were typically cited, in this country, as "best practices" organizations by researchers and development experts. A few illustrations of why these companies were considered exemplary offer suggestions for the cross-cultural transfer of HRD models from developed to lesser developed nations. Both companies encouraged employees to think of the enterprise as their village or community and the CEO as their chief. Efforts to ensure a collective spirit, build on the importance of group solidarity and trust, and decrease political infighting prohibited questions or discussion about an employee's ethnic and tribal background. (In one company, this was grounds for dismissal).

Operations were decentralized and management layers were reduced by half. Managers were encouraged to delegate while maintaining the myth of power distance (Hofstede, 1984) culturally needed to ensure the cooperation of older employees. Moreover, managers improved their employee counseling skills in order to provide the kind of nurturing atmosphere culturally found in village societies. Promotion and salaries were tied to performance and sanctioning protocols were made consistent. Such procedures permitted managers to avoid requests for favors form friends and family without appearing disloyal or unfriendly.

Profit sharing plans encouraged a sense of ownership. Employee benefit plans were modeled after village social welfare systems. Not only were benefits improved, all of the employees systematically were asked to contribute to a disaster fund (a kind of social safety net) that gave employees "in need" financial help. Moreover, village rites such community meetings to exchange information and a council of elders to hear grievances, rule of matters of employee assistance and advise the tribe's leader were incorporated into organizational practices. Thus, organizational issues and problems on all levels were viewed in the same way one would collectively view threats to village security. Employees were encouraged to work in cross-functional teams and act as back ups for colleagues who must absent themselves for family illnesses and funerals. Moreover, company savings systems and better benefits encouraged greater employee loyalty and concentration by reducing the financial strain associated with unforseen family and tribal obligations.

The informants at the above two companies were proud that they were able to transform their cultures in little more than five years. Change at this speed tends to defy most thinking about organizational change which suggests that significant change requires double the amount of time (Trice & Beyer, 1993). These "best practices" companies believe that change occurred because their employees wanted to change, interventions were perceived as beneficial, and the "economy of affection" was respected. Yet, these informants did not believe that their work is complete. They describe their task, now, as one of maintaining the transformation. They stressed the power the local culture and its ability to erode reforms if these traditions are underestimated and not continually integrated into changing company practices and policies. Likewise, employee behavior must be understood, rewarded and when necessary forgiven within the context of their belief systems.

Summary

While inferences are not generalizable, these data raise interesting questions that merit consideration. The data indicate that work beliefs reflect nationally shaped differences that can impact the transfer of foreign work and development models. As Africans seek ways to improve their productivity and international competitiveness, it is understandable that they will be encouraged to consider approaches that have been successful for "First World" investment partners and business rivals. Building on local cultural frames, as illustrated in "two best practices" companies reported in this study will enhance the success of these cross-cultural transfers and international partnerships.

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Human Resource Development in the People's Republic of China

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This paper will describe the history and present situation regarding HRD in the People's Republic of China. It states the problems faced previously by HRD and analyzes the reasons, introduces the transition after China's reformation of its economics system and opening to the outside world, and describes some practices to strengthen human resource development in meeting future challenges. Extant literature and the personal experiences of the senior author are relied on for the information presented.

Brief Introduction to Human Resources in the PRC

The People's Republic of China is the third largest country geographically in the world and has a population of about 1.2 billion. Of this number, about 810 million are classified as human resources, meaning here that they are over 16 years old and have the ability to work. Six hundred and one million are employed, with 150 million in cities, 440 million in the countryside, and 11 million in private businesses in various locations. The rate of unemployment is 2.6% in cities (as of 1993) (Personnel Ministry of the People's Republic of China, 1994). The diverse needs and problems of such a large population are the main tasks faced by China. However, while the large population is, to some extent, a heavy burden, it is also a huge potential if well developed, to serve as employees, managers, and consumers. So human resource development is and will always be a main issue in China.

In China, human resources fall generally into five categories: farmers, workers, civil servants, professionals, and others (for example, students, the unemployed, etc.). Professionals are those who are highly educated (including those with advanced vocational education) or persons who have highly-developed professional skills (those with scientific and technical titles) (Xiang, 1987; Zhang & Zhao, 1987). Today science and technology are the major production factors; thus, China is paying more and more attention to professionals' education and development. As of 1993, there were 26 million professionals in China, 14 million of whom have higher education and 12 million with technical secondary school education (Personnel Ministry of the People's Republic of China, 1994). This paper will emphasize the professionals' development.

Problem Statement

The problem to be answered within this paper is, "What are the past and present factors influencing the development of human resource development in the People's Republic of China?"

Methodology

Two primary methodologies inform the content of the paper. The first is the traditional review of the literature. Much of the literature reviewed does not exist translated into English. While English titles are

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used in the references, interested readers should be aware that these are mainly Chinese documents, except for those published in English journals. The second approach was a participant-observer approach. The senior author of this document is currently the Director of the International Cooperation Department of the Personnel Center of Liaoning Province in the northeast of the People's Republic of China. He has served as manager in most of the departments of the Center. He has worked for twenty years in various aspects of human resources and human resource development within the People's Republic of China and has experienced first hand the transition from the Cultural Revolution to China's currently rapid transition to an open economy. He is currently a Humphrey Fellow at the University of Minnesota where he is putting primary emphasis on Human Resource Development within Public Agencies. This experience has helped to illumine the literature.

Previous Situation for HRD

Before 1976, China was a closed country with a planned economic system and self-reliance policy (not relying on foreign countries was a high value). At that time, the development of human resources focused primarily on political development, especially during the period from 1966 to 1976. For example, people were required to take fixed time each week to study politics; while middle school students were asked to go to the countryside to live and work for more than one year (called "again education") after graduating. The people who worked in factories and farms, or who served in the army could be recommended to go to university for higher education, according to their political performance, without carefully considering their intelligence and knowledge. Therefore, the whole human resource development situation was backward, even though China still had numbers of highly qualified professionals at that time (Xu & Ma, 1992). (For an extended history of HRD in the People's Republic of China, see Shi & McLean, 1995).

However, China was not aware of this problem and did not know whether there were differences between its human resource situation and quality and those of foreign countries, for China's door was closed, so there were no international comparisons possible. During this period, some believed that China had more qualified human resources than other countries. However, this opinion changed after opening the door to the outside world.

Facing the Problems

From 1976, China began to reform its unreasonable systems. In 1979, China began to implement two new policies with important historical significance--reforming the economic system and opening to the outside world. This occurred through introducing a market system and strengthening international cooperation with different countries, resulting in a rapid increase in the economy, with an annual economic real growth rate of around 10% for many years (e.g., nearly 13% in 1992 and 13% in 1993) (US Dept. of State, 1995). The World Bank predicts that China's economy will grow 8-10% per year until the year 2000 (US Dept. of State, 1995). One of the challenges still faced by China, however, is human resource development. China realizes that both reforming the economy and opening the market system need large numbers of highly qualified human resources (Deployment Dept. of Personnel Ministry of PRC, 1993). China is currently underdeveloped in both individual training and development and organization development.

Individual Development. To carry out its economic strategies, China focused on importing advanced technologies from foreign countries for domestic science and technology reform. A series of Special Economic Zones was set up to attract foreign companies to invest and set up manufacturing operations. During this process, some Chinese companies were taken advantage of by foreign sellers when they imported what they thought were advanced technologies but, in fact, were outmoded technologies and equipment. (While it is true that some of the technologies were new to China, they were not up to date and not what national strategy emphasized). This was possible because many companies did not know the situation of technology development in the world. Some companies were frustrated in

international competition because they did not know international regulations and conventions and did not have sufficient international business experience (Dai, 1994).

The Special Economic Zones built along the east coast attracted large numbers of foreign companies to invest and build foreign company subsidiaries or foreign-China joint ventures. However, in the beginning, foreign companies had difficulty in finding enough or sufficiently qualified Chinese workers, professionals, and managers, which interfered with the progress of this strategy.

As a result, China had to reconsider its human resource development problems and ways to solve them (Yan, 1991b). Interviews and a review of the literature suggested five reasons why human resource development practices have been backward.

1. People's knowledge, especially that of professionals in science and technology, have become outmoded. China's door was closed for many years, it had almost no academic exchange programs or activities in science, technology and education with advanced countries, such as the United States and Japan. As a result, knowledge presented in universities in China remained the same without obvious change for many years. Therefore, when the country opened up, professionals were unable to accept and integrate a large quantity of new scientific and technical knowledge coming from foreign countries so suddenly.

2. Professional development was ignored. In 1986, a human resource development department investigated 10,048 professionals in Shanghai (the largest city in China whose people are the best educated). It showed that, from 1983 to 1985, within three years, 7% received over 6 months of professional development, 5% received 3 to 6 months, 6% received 1 to 3 months, and 82% received no professional development (Liu, 1988). The situation with workers and farmers was worse. In addition, as human resources were divided only into cadres (including professionals), workers, and farmers at that time, the training could not fully focus on individual professional needs. A study in a more limited context (PRC-US joint ventures) (Shi & McLean, 1996) likewise found that training and development was still in the beginning stages of development.

3. Business people had little international business knowledge and experiences. Before opening of the country, there were not many international business majors in universities. In addition, firms that were buying and selling were controlled by the government, so they did not have to pay close attention to international factors in performing trade and commercial business. They had only to follow the plans made by the government; international business plans were usually based on goodwill between countries rather than on competition.

4. There was a cultural barrier between Chinese and foreign companies. China has about 5,000 years of history, and its people were strongly influenced by this long history and culture derived from it, so their ideas and behaviors could not be easily changed. Chinese had little cross-cultural education, so they usually judged or understood international issues only by its own criteria. Therefore, when they confronted different cultures, and different models and norms of behavior, they did not understand and responded with a negative attitude. (For example, they were surprised when foreigners sat on the table to discuss questions, or they did not have the same idea about friendship, a very important value for the Chinese). Of course, foreign companies had the same problem; for example, they found that they usually could not get an immediate reply during technical and business negotiations, because they did not know that the Chinese value group decisions). So sometimes they felt that something between them was going wrong. This cross cultural problem interfered with the progress of opening up.

5. The old human resource management system limited human resource transfers. An individual's permanent personal file moves with the employee from job to job and is very important in determining one's position and advancement (Zhao, 1988). These files include records about ten aspects of incumbents in government, institutions, and enterprises, such as wages, position, cadre or worker status (treatment with regard to salary and pensions is different), length of service (important for level of wage and pension, and promotion),family relationships, political status, educational experiences, travel records, and so forth. After a job transfer, almost everything done in the new organization is based on the experiences in the former organization, though sometimes the position is the exception. That is, decisions are based almost solely on the personal file records. However, human resource departments in diverse organizations usually restrict qualified professionals' transfers and do not deliver their personal files. In this case, changing a job is very difficult. On the other hand, foreign companies, joint ventures, or private firms do not need these files to determine salaries, job responsibilities, etc. People were uneasy about

taking chances with this. They also felt few incentives to giving full energy to their present positions (Hu, Shen, & Zhou, 1988).

Organization Development. In China, organizations have been mainly categorized as government departments, institutions, and enterprises. An institution is an organization under a related department of the government, implementing public services. These are financed in three ways: 1) total support by the government; 2) mixed support from the government and from independently generated revenues; and 3) solely from independently generated revenues. In the first instance, all funds collected are turned over to the government. In both of the other situations, some of the money can be kept by the institution. Before economic reform, many government departments were in charge of the management of both institutions and enterprises (for example, wage standards, employee numbers, personal promotions and transfers, production profits, etc.). Some functional differences between government departments and institutions were not very clear. This is traditional within a planned economy model. After the economic reforms, almost all organizations in China faced a new challenge as they were urged to adapt to the new national and international situation or environment. As a result, the nation implemented a series of reforms in, for example, structures and functions of government, institutions, and enterprises.

Under the new economic system and international situation, some organizations, in the beginning, did not operate well. There were many organizational reasons, including overlap and surplus in some functions, surplus of employees, lack of relationships between the inside and outside of the organizations, lack of individual and organizational incentives, and so on. The investigation in Shanghai in 1986 showed that 55.6% of professionals gave only half effort to their jobs, 6.8% gave less, and only 37.4% gave full effort. While these people were full-time employed, only 22.5% of people had sufficient full-time work (Liu, 1988). As the goals and functions of the organizations changed, the structures of the organizations need adjustment, and individuals need to be reeducated or developed.

For many reasons, professional transfers were not very common. According to the investigation mentioned above, 60.7% never changed their jobs, 20% did one time, and 19.3% had more than one transfer (Liu, 1988). (As Shanghai is one of most attractive cities in China, the number experiencing transfers is probably higher than the average of the country) Further, dismissing employees is not encouraged or is very limited. Therefore, the Chinese government in recent years has paid close attention to organization development and human resource development. In the past few years, China has insisted on implementing different policies to reform and build new functions in governments, institutions and enterprises.

Reform and Transition

To respond to these problems, the following efforts have been undertaken:

1. Reform of higher education.

a. Students who want to go to university take national exams in subjects such as mathematics, physics, literature, history, etc., go to different universities according to their scores. Thus, rather than basing such decisions on political factors, students will now get a different education according to their intelligence, interests, requirements, and priority of skills. Previously, all qualifying students received tuition and housing at no charge. Recently, universities began to collect a small part of the actual tuition fees from all students. Students whose qualifications fall below the minimum may still attend with the payment of a higher fee. In this way, persons whose scores are just below the requirement of universities may attend, making provision for students who are not good at taking exams or for whom the scores do not show their real competence.

b. Set up a few new universities, such as international trade university and tax university according to the requirements of an international business and market system. Many old universities have been reorganized with new and refreshed majors focusing on marketing , international finance. international economic law, and so on.

In addition, TV university and evening university were also set up for persons who are not qualified for formal universities and people who are on-the-job. In addition to greater access, students have classes taught by the best national professors (in TV university) or the best local professors (in

evening universities). Through this education, people who are on-the-job freshen their knowledge and then are more qualified for their jobs, and some find new jobs in new fields.

2. Strengthening of vocational training

a. Evening special professional training classes have been encouraged. These kinds of short-term training are usually implemented by universities and other educational institutions and cover a wide field, for example, foreign languages, accounting, law, computers, cooking, etc. (Zhang, 1994) In addition, both national and local TV stations have set up educational channels. One purpose is broadcasting a series of professional seminars, such as modern management, western economy, foreign trade, foreign language (such as, English, Russian, Japanese, French), and computer applications. This training has helped the Chinese to adapt to the new national and international environment.

b Middle schools are now divided into two parts after junior high school: senior high school and vocational middle school, which separates students into two parts--those who hope to go to university and those who want to work after they graduate from the middle high school. The students who want to work after graduating go to vocational schools and begin to study a special skill needed by society besides the necessary fundamental education, which has provided a large group of qualified workers.

c. In order to meet the needs of the transition of the organizations, many organizations encourage their staffs or employees to refresh their knowledge and skills. Some organizations might give them a little (sometimes all) financial support and allow them to take a one-day leave each week for day-time studies (Ma, 1988). Some companies have set up training centers to train managers, professionals, and workers according to their situation. Some organizations have their own universities, and the majors and training are closely associated with their own requirements. If required, they will send prospective persons for short-term training in universities, research institutes, or other companies in China or foreign countries. In addition, a few companies have set up a training strategies such as apprenticeships to professionals to train new university students to achieve potential competitive advantage (Yan, 1991a).

d. Local government encourages professionals in cities to help those in rural areas so professionals in rural areas can accept new knowledge and apply new technology as soon as possible (based on a Chinese tradition/value called "help each other"). Each year, many kinds of groups (such as, teachers, doctors, engineers, agriculture technicians) are organized by schools (universities), hospitals, factories, and institutes to visit the countryside to enhance professionals' knowledge and skills there (Yan, 1992). Now, farmers are using advanced techniques in their farm fields and factories are finding some of their products to be very popular when sold in international markets.

e. Promotion of professional examinations is assisting in the recruitment of civil servants, incorporating both written tests and interviews. They are designed to choose people who have foresight and a broad perspective (Liaoning Personnel Examination Center, 1994, 1995). The professional foreign language exam is required for people who want technical titles, such as engineer or pharmacist, to guarantee that they can directly and quickly incorporate up-to-date knowledge from countries which are advanced in the relative fields without having to wait for language translation(Liaoning Personnel Examination Center, 1994, 1995). After on-the-job training, some professionals, such as accountants, cashiers, and international business persons, often take professional exams to obtain professional position certificates and to show that one is qualified to do that kind of work. For example, if one whose job is international business does not pass the examination in his or her field, he/she will have no right to sign business contracts with foreign companies.

3. Encourage young people to study and professionals to work abroad, and the state gives financial support to prospective people when they study or work overseas. This policy pushes people to be involved in international advanced science and technology and to develop cultural understanding and inter-business connections. For example, considering the requirement of business between China and Russia after disintegration of the former Soviet Union, the Liaoning Human Resource Center organized 255 people to study Russian language and business, and now those people are playing an important role in international business between China and other countries which are independent from the former Soviet Union (Liaoning Personnel Center, 1985-1995).

4. Implement preferential policy to attract excellent Chinese people who graduated from overseas to come back and work in China. They are usually provided with working labs or financial support to do work in their field and conduct or develop his or her assistants. In addition, international experts are invited to China for teaching, working, or giving lectures (Liaoning Personnel Bureau, 1992).

Significantly, more and more common people realize the importance of human resource development. Many people, especially young people, who are on the job go to evening classes which are associated with changes in their jobs, their interests, or their future. They say they are going to develop themselves. Some young families hire housework-helpers to cook, take care of the child, and clean rooms while they study in evening classes, as they consider that the training organized by their organizations are limited. Some organize their own study activities, for example, a foreign language corner (an open, public place, such as a large square downtown) and reading associations. At an English corner, many people (including business manages, students, civil servants, professionals, workers) meet to practice spoken foreign languages (mainly English) at a fixed place each evening from May to October (different cities have different times). Although the language environment at English corners is not very good, it is effective.

After opening to the outside world, China imported investments, advanced technology and management, and also some kinds of foreign cultures came with them. China began to understand other cultures. In the past few years, China has been publishing books, magazines, and other materials and holding diverse foreign culture seminars, broadcasting TV films to introduce foreign histories, lives, culture, and so on. But this impact has been much less than the impact from technology. China has chosen to emphasize technology over culture. But this does not mean that China does not care about new thoughts and having a good culture. In the past few years, the hottest phrase in China has been "transforming ideas." And a few people realize that cross cultural development is very important. They believe that different people in different countries have different thinking models and norms of behavior, and these are largely influenced by their special culture. This is not to say that one is correct and one is incorrect. For example, ways to show "yes" and "no" in different countries have different ways. Only through intercultural training can people from different countries understand each other and have a possibility for good cooperation. This suggests that China is taking in some good cultural components from other countries.

Since many human resource development initiatives have been undertaken in China, human resource quality in China is increasing rapidly.

Future Challenges

In spite of the major steps China has undertaken in the field of human resource development, some problems still exist. For example:

1. The number of people receiving higher education is still limited. Each year, only about 20% of new employees come from university or higher vocational education (Personnel Ministry of the People's Republic of China, 1994). This is far less than required.
2. Science and technology in China in many fields are still backwards compared with advanced countries, and there is a lack of balance across fields. Therefore, human resource development is seriously restricted by the deficiencies in science and technology.
3. Since the majority of institutions and enterprises are state owned, some managers focus on immediate interests and not long-term ones (short-term behavior). So they do not pay close attention to human resource development in their organizations.
4. Access to information (technology, management, new ideas, future issues, etc.) is quite limited. Foreigners in the United States often feel that diverse information comes from all directions like huge waves; you are unable to take in all of it, but you can not avoid its influence. From this, people are challenged and given opportunities.

China is struggling with these issues and trying to figure out how to respond to these challenges. The Chinese recognize more and more what this world really is, and how to learn, understand, and deal with world issues are continuously changing. They increasingly find that, almost wherever they go in China, they can find products made in foreign countries or foreign-China joint ventures, such as Coca-Cola. Therefore, people are realizing that world issues have become globalized and complex, and China can not avoid international cooperation, and intervention and competition from countries all over the world. So China needs people with new knowledge and skills to respond to these challenges, especially new professionals who must be internationally oriented (Dai, 1994).

People who are responsible for human resource development are involved in research and are working to prepare people for the new economy. But they have no accurate notion about what it will take to develop such internationally-oriented professionals or qualified employees for the evolving economy. Nor do they know by what criteria to identify, select, and develop such employees. This is the challenge that Chinese human resource development professionals must now confront..

Conclusion

With the rapid changes that have occurred in recent years in the People's Republic of China with respect to human resources and human resource development, it is reasonable to expect that continuing, rapid change in policies and practices will continue. In the process, it is likely that human resource development, with its three-pronged thrust of training and development, organization development, and career development (McLagan, 1989), will continue to grow and have an increasingly positive impact on business practices.

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